



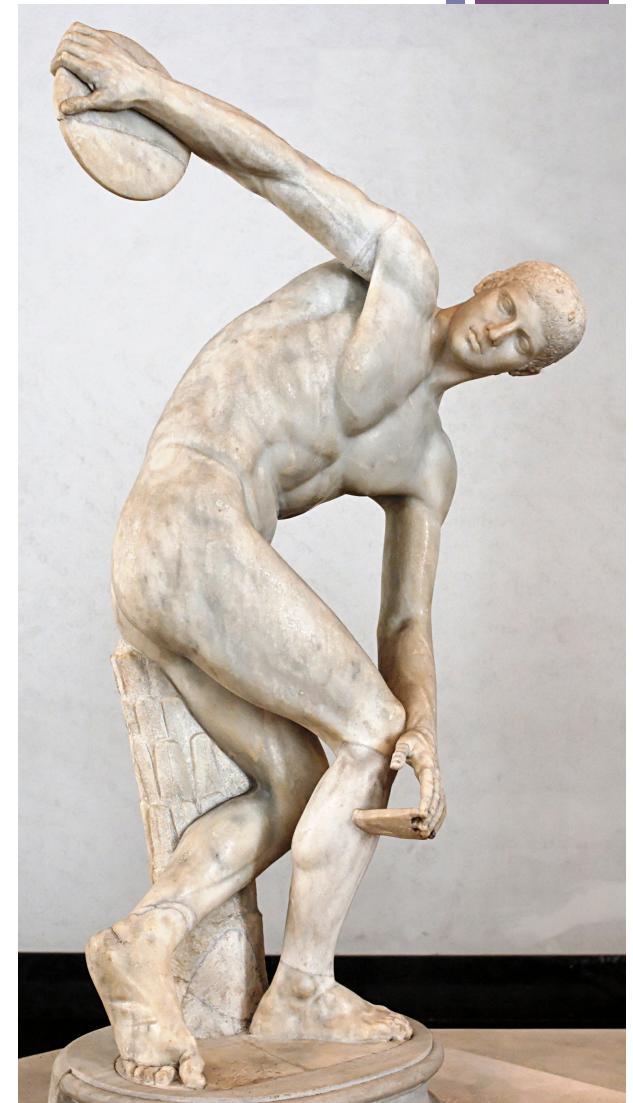
THE OLYMPICS



Do Now: What is the difference between a game and a competition?

+ To the Greeks, these were competitions...

- The Greeks had a strong sense of competition “agon”
 - Need to prove dominance – be excellent
 - Tradition of celebrating the best - think Odysseus
 - Competition focuses on the competitors
- “Games” were what the Romans called the Olympics
 - Romans liked entertainment as distraction
 - Spectacles, shows, and exhibitions for the audience
- This was **SERIOUS STUFF**, not play time!



+ Ancient Olympics

- Started in 776 BC in Olympia, Greece
- To honor the Greek gods, especially Zeus
- All wars halted; considered a dishonor to Zeus to fight during the Olympics → called the “Olympic Truce”
- 100 oxen sacrificed to start the games
- 4 year periods called Olympiads



+ Olympia



+ Olympic Athletes

- Only non-murdering Greek men were allowed to participate
- Every man for himself; did not compete for home city-state
- Considered honorable to compete nude or with very few clothes “gymnos”
- First Olympics only had running events; eventually added horseback and chariot events, as well as wrestling, boxing, and field events



+ Some things to consider...

Rules

- In wrestling:
 - No biting or eye gouging
 - No breaking opponents limbs
- In boxing:
 - Compete until one man gives up or dies
 - No weight classes



Winning

- Competitors were winners or losers; no “places”
- Winners were crowned with olive wreaths, losers were ignored



- Winners had statues erected in their honor in their home city-states and in Olympia, they were also immortalized in poetry and art – and came home heroes!

+ End and rebirth...

- Banned by Roman Emperor Theodosius in 394 AD, who thought they were “pagan games”
- Revived in 1896 and hosted in Athens, Greece
- Started using medals and the three “place” system
- Women allowed to compete in 1900 Games in Paris

Olympic flame is has been brought from Olympia since 1928; created using parabolic mirror and olive oil.



+ Is competition about the individual
or about the society?

